



7-28-10 Meeting Notes
Information Sharing & Coordination Work Group
(Smart Planning Task Force Established under SF2389)

10:30 AM
Rebuild Iowa Office, Conference Room 2
Wallace Building
502 E. Ninth Street, 2nd Floor
Des Moines, IA 50319

Attendees (* indicates telephonic participation)

Don Temeyer, HR Green, Chair
Susan Judkins Josten, Rebuild Iowa Office
Aaron Todd, Rebuild Iowa Office
Heather Hackbarth, Department of Management
Eric Abrams, IDOT
Kevin Blanshan, INRCOG*
Francis Boggus, Great Places/Department of Cultural Affairs
Mickey Carlson, TownCraft/Iowa Finance Authority*
Bill Freeland, House Democratic Caucus Staff
Ron Gaines, City of Cedar Falls
Bruce Greiner, Office of Energy Independence
LaVon Griffieon, 1000 Friends of Iowa
Linda Howard, Great Places/Department of Cultural Affairs
Pam Jochum, State Senator from Dubuque
Deb Kozel, Legislative Services Agency
Mary Beth Mellick, Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC)
Jace Mikels, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff
Al Muhlenbruck, Southeast Iowa*
Dan Schlichtmann, INRCOG*
Michelle Shaffer, Department on Aging
Kirk Siegle, Southeast Iowa
Ruth Randleman, Mayor of Carlisle and Task Force Co-Chair *

Also visiting the meeting were Liz Van Zomeren from the Rebuild Iowa Office and Rick Hunsaker of IARC and Region XII, representing the Regional Comprehensive Planning work group.

- I. Don Temeyer, chair, welcomed the group and led introductions. He welcomed new work group members Francis Boggus and Linda Howard from the Department of Cultural Affairs, Senator Pam Jochum from Dubuque, Ron Gaines from the City of Cedar Falls, and Kirk Siegle and Al Muhlenbruck from Southeast Iowa. Work group members are encouraged to invite other interested parties to participate in future meetings.
- II. The Meeting Notes from the 7/7/10 work group meeting were approved.
- III. A list of planning resources prepared by INRCOG was reviewed and discussed. The list shows what planners have to go through to obtain data. Eric Abrams from the DOT reviewed GIS materials that were brought to the first meeting on 7/7/10 and are being posted on the Smart Planning web site. The “Return on Investment” document is of particular interest since it shows what can be saved by coordinating GIS data. Some cities and counties don’t have GIS yet. Don Temeyer asked the group where this type of information should be housed. Eric Abrams reminded everyone that the Iowa Geographic Information Council does not have the capacity to house the information today. Something needs to be formed with technical assistance capability and standardization influence, probably involving a State GIO and 4-5 staff members.. A good example is the State GIO in Arkansas. Iowa previously had a state GIO. It moved to ISU in the early 2000’s, becoming more educational in nature, and eventually funding was eliminated. Don Temeyer asked members of the work group to consider if their own agencies might serve as a repository. Kevin Blanshan said that any state-based coordination point will require a good cross-section to govern it. He said it makes sense to have a statewide clearinghouse, but there are concerns at the local level about any state bureaucracy.
- IV. 10:45 AM: Discussion with Professor Brian Ohm, University of Wisconsin, Department of Urban and Regional Planning. Mr. Ohm participated by phone. He is a professor and attorney, and worked with Wisconsin legislators in 1999 on their Smart Growth Law. He has reviewed Iowa’s law, which is somewhat tied to hazard mitigation and flooding. In Wisconsin, land use had been a hot button issue. A survey prior to the 1999 passage of legislation found that less than one-third of the local governments had a land use plan let alone a comprehensive plan. The lack of a “planning culture” was the impetus for their legislation, unlike Iowa where the impetus was risk mitigation. Over the past ten years, Wisconsin has accomplished a lot partly due to continued support from the legislature.

There are over 1900 local government units, including 72 counties, about 1200 towns (unincorporated communities) and the remainder cities and villages. Larger cities (Milwaukee, Madison) have their own land information programs. Wisconsin uses the term “town” to refer to unincorporated areas, while “cities” and “villages” are incorporated. Towns can’t annex, which creates intergovernmental conflict. Towns may have their own zoning, fall under county zoning, or have no zoning at all. A land information board oversees the land information program. It’s very county driven, with lots of collaboration between counties and the state.

Over 1600 comprehensive plans have been completed since 1999. This enormous effort in state planning hasn't resulted in "grand innovations." However, it is well supported by Wisconsin's Land Information Program which probably goes back 30 years when efforts were made to modernize the state's land information. All counties have Land Information Officers and have fairly sophisticated GIS programs. About 25 counties have planning departments and in those counties, the Land Information Officer is housed there. In others, the LIO may be housed with the conservation department of the registrar of deeds. When the legislature passed their planning law in 1999, the land information needed to support planning decisions was largely in place although there was more variance than exists today. This has historically been funded by real estate transfer fees. Demographic data has also been a helpful resource. Wisconsin also has nine regional planning commissions, which have produced most of the 1600+ comprehensive plans since 1999. They serve as consultants for a lower fee than private consulting firms charge. All but one of the regional planning commissions serve more than one county. They have a different structure than a COG or MPO, which often focus more on transportation; the regional planning commissions truly focus on planning. Regional Planning Commissions are funded through counties, which levy a tax or fee if they decide to participate in an RPC. Sometimes a local government that is struggling financially will drop out for awhile. They also apply for state and federal grants. The state does not fund the RPCs. No state agency oversees or coordinates the RPCs; they're independent. Each belongs to the Association of Wisconsin Regional Planning Commissions. When the RPCs were set up in the 1950s, the goal was to cover the state and boundaries were drawn without regard for geographic features or demographics. The strength of the regional planning offices creates a challenge for coordination at the state level. The state hasn't had a state planning office since the 1980's. There is no effort to oversee whether comprehensive plans match the "goals" upon which their state grant is awarded; "in theory they are contractually bound" and 15-25% of the funding is held back until the plan is completed. RPC commissioners are part-time, appointed based on the , and receive a per diem payment but no salary.

Wisconsin's 1999 legislation included a grant program to support planning that was housed in the Department of Administrative Services, but no corresponding planning administration was set up at the state level. DAS also administers the land information systems funding. The DNR was considered as a place to house the program, but they had no expertise in certain areas such as economic development so it was decided that DAS was the most appropriate location. Also, the leader of DAS was key in passing the legislation so the political intention was to leave it with that agency. The State of Wisconsin typically appropriates about \$2 million/year to support local planning. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis. Goals that are similar to Iowa's Smart Planning Principles are used to prioritize the planning awards. One of the highest criteria is having multiple jurisdictions involved in joint planning since this is seen as a way to reduce land use disputes.

Several state agencies are active in providing information to local communities. The DNR and DOT make information available, but the demand is not as great as originally expected due to the sophistication of local planning efforts. The Wisconsin Historical Society makes archeological information available without compromising security.

- V. 11:30 AM: Discussion with [Associate Professor Jerry Anthony, University of Iowa](#), Graduate Program in Urban and Regional Planning. Professor Anthony reviewed the chronology of state efforts to create incentives for planning, beginning with Hawaii in 1961. Some states have made planning mandatory, with or without incentives; and some have relied on incentives only. He mentioned that many consider the 1990 State of Washington's program, which is mandatory for communities in fast-growing areas and voluntary for other communities, has worked well. Other highlighted plans included 1) Oregon's planning, implementation and capacity building process, for which state funding is provided to keep planning departments operating but noncompliance can result in loss of funding eligibility; 2) Florida's process of preparing a plan at the state level and requiring locals to implement it; 3) Maine's process which only provides funding for capacity building and not implementing plans, but also withholds funding when noncompliance occurs; and 4) Vermont's funding of both planning and implementation based on approval by a regional entity. Professor Anthony will provide notes on the chronology to be kept with our records.

Professor Anthony also commented that zoning is inexpensive compared to comprehensive planning; perhaps an idea would be to require zoning or risk the loss of funding eligibility. Iowa could create a new state authority. In some other states, COGs have expanded their expertise beyond transportation. Iowa could look at creating regional planning bodies on a watershed basis. Perhaps an existing state agency could be empowered with planning oversight; possibilities could include the Department of Management, Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Economic Development, or the City Development Board that is housed at IDED.

- VI. Other Issues – The chair commented that watershed issues transcend this discussion and should be considered by the group. Perhaps the Iowa Flood Center could be contacted to participate in the next meeting on August 25th. Also, we should find out where agriculture interests stand on watershed issues and planning.

Bruce Greiner of the Office of Energy Independence will provide their report for distribution to the group for consideration of energy issues.

- VII. Next Meeting August 25, 2010 – The next meeting will be held from 10 AM – 3 PM on August 25th. Lunch will be ordered in. The chair said we need to focus on the best place to store planning information. Kirk Siegle suggested looking at what's available to support planning efforts instead of reinventing the wheel. The chair asked state agencies to consider whether they want to volunteer to be the repository of information.
- VIII. The meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.